



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 01, 2023

**SB 117**

**State Highway Administration - Litter Collection and Mowing**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 117 would require the State Highway Administration (SHA), consistently and regularly, to collect litter and mow the grass along State highways and interstate highways it is responsible for maintaining. The bill establishes minimum frequency requirements for litter collection and mowing, depending on the season. SHA must contract with a Maryland-based company to collect litter and provide mowing services, as specified. Litter collection and mowing services provided under the bill must be considered a supplemental environmental project (SEP) for purposes of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) SEP policy.

The Conference supports legislation that recognizes the integral ecosystem in which we live. In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')*, Pope Francis states that *"There is a growing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet... Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it."* Making sure that our state highways and interstates are clean is just one way we can make sure to care for our common home.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 117.

